

Just what this "something else" was, Thomas Burke has revealed for us, as do none of the plastic artists, nor as poets, novelists, or dramatists dreamed—or did but dream—of revealing. Burke peoples with laughter, song, sorrow, passion, lust, cruelty and tenderness such spots even as Whistler's Battersea Bridge and Cremorne Gardens. Along the jagged narrow streets of Limehouse and Blackwall, of Pennyfields, Poplar and the Isle of Dogs, Burke has painted pictures more *genre* than Hogarth or the less-known caricatures of Doré. In all of them flash forth the high lights of laughter and the ruddy overtones of humour. Where most writers have seen only London's institutions, Burke has seen her people—always her people.

One "Happy Night" with Burke in Battersea, meeting the young fellows, or a night at the cosy little flat of two professional acrobats, "Mumdear" and "Dad" and the "Kids," is enough to set a person aghast with anger and disappointment at all our literature has missed by reason of social theories in the heads of our writers about "the people"; theories whose final and vicious qualities are those of detachment and patronage. For Burke does not visit homes, theatres, parties, dance-halls, saloons, dives, dock-sides and chop-houses as a mere spectator, and never as a critic.

If you will come with me, we will slip through the foreign quarters. We will have a bloodthirsty night in the athletic saloons of Bethnal Green. We will have a bitter night in the dock-side saloons. We will have a sickening night in sinister places of no name and no locality, where the proper people do not venture. We will have a glittering night in the Hoxton bars. We will have, too, a night among the sweet lights of the Cockney home, and among pleasant working-class interiors. And we will . . .

But let us get started.

FRANK PEASE.

THE MIDDLE-CLASS SPIRIT.

It is at least curious that observers do not more generally consider the spirit which now animates the middle class to be as great an obstacle to the progress of society as it is in fact. It is like a pneumatic brake on the evolutionary wheel, threatening human solidarity and co-operation.

A striking indication of this modern middle-class spirit is furnished by the attitude of the bourgeois in the recent French strike-movement. The leaders of the French railway-unions had secured the almost unwilling support of the General Confederation of Labour, and a strike in key-industries to enforce a demand for a moderate form of railway-nationalization was decided upon for the beginning of May. A more unsuitable moment could not have been chosen, and as a result the Confederation has been faced after twenty-five years' existence with the prospect of dissolution and the consequent scrapping of all its hard-won gains. Far from rising as one man against this blow at the head of their organizations, the trade-unionists have now gone back to work, and on the railways fully 10,000 men have found themselves permanently locked out.

It has been a triumph for French reaction. When the electorate of France returned last November a Nationalist (i. e., reactionary) Chamber of Deputies, one of two events appeared inevitable. Either the workers were to be rendered desperate to the point of revolt or the Nationalists would impose their will; and the workers have not been rendered desperate. If in all countries the war has stimulated the social consciousness of what is called the proletariat, it seems also to have wearied it beyond all struggle.

Although trade-unions were legalized in France in 1884, French labour to-day is still too weak to fight. It is also too weary and too hopeless; and one great source of this discouragement has been the attitude of the salariat.

Inspired by the behaviour of the middle classes during last year's railway-strike in England, French employers have seduced the salary-earning bourgeois. Under the name of the Civic League, a body has been in existence for some months ready in emergencies to provide engineering students to control the throttles of locomotives and amateur motorists to sit at the steering-wheels of omnibuses. It has not been so easy to find volunteers to do the work of dockers. These substitute omnibus-drivers are paid eight dollars a day during a strike and are given passes entitling them to free omnibus-travel for a year. Compensations on this generous scale are likely to be found sufficient to rouse the spirit of any middle-class blackleg. It is this attitude of the bourgeois which has given the French worker the sense of being made war upon by his compatriots, and has drowned his fighting spirit in a sea of bitterness.

The bourgeois of France looks upon the working-class as a machine that he has bought entirely for his own convenience. That he, by enjoying the fruit of their labour, renders himself responsible for their fair treatment, is a proposition he is not capable of understanding. He is not even concerned with fair treatment for himself. To live without working, to be a drone dependent on the efforts of others in return for the loan of his savings or his inheritance, to live in short upon rent—that is the ambition of the French bourgeois. To attain this end no deprivation and no ignominy are too great, even though he must know he can not fulfil his ambition until an age when he will be past normal enjoyments and when the habit of stinting will have become second nature.

The French *petit bourgeois* does not see beyond money. If he and his wife—whom he will have chosen for her small appetite, dressmaking ability, or *dot*, rather than for her comradeship or physical charms—gain some crumbs of culture which their Anglo-Saxon brother never knows, it is because culture is strewn abroad generously in France. Thus, a casual observer may gain a better impression of him than he deserves. The French *petit bourgeois* simply envies the capitalist and yearns to become a capitalist himself.

In England the ideal of the middle class appears superficially less materialistic. There is less scrapping of money into savings because a certain open-handedness is essential to the belief in this ideal. For the man of the English middle class wants only to be called a gentleman, and if no one will give him this title he will apply it to himself. This implies that all can not be gentlemen or ladies. A waitress in a London restaurant is known to herself as a young lady, but the typist who passes her in the street could tell her that she is mistaken. It is the typist's friends who have sunk a legacy in a tea-shop, where they themselves wait and wash dishes, who are ladies.

In America one man calls himself as good as another; and if he avoids the use of the word gentleman, he is satisfied that he is no snob. But it comes to the same thing. When the bourgeois concentrates on the desire to be a small capitalist, when the English suburbanite calls himself a gentleman, when the American stockbroker's clerk thinks that he is as good as Rockefeller, they have but one desire. The middle-

class man is looking the wrong way. It is not for him to say that he is as good as the more affluent; he should realize that the less fortunate are as good as he.

A large proportion of the middle class of all countries are idolators of hierarchy. They value the existence of people they can think of as being above them; it permits the hope that one day they too may rise. But they need encouragement in their climb; they must feel that they are already some way up; they demand the existence of a class they may look down upon. Allied to this type is the servile mind that shrinks from responsibility and is lost if it can not turn to authority. The servile mind is becoming exclusively middle class. And its servility is acquired; it has never been trained in initiative for fear that it might grow presumptuous.

The propagandists for an economic and social rebirth, eager only to awaken the wage-earner to social consciousness, have neglected these manifestations of the middle-class spirit. Reaction stalks in France and Germany just as it does in the United States; it is biding its time in England. Everywhere it has the support of the salariat, because the salariat is blind. In 1884, in a London drawing-room, the Fabian Society came into being. It discarded the idea of revolution; it aimed at reforming the world by "permeating" the middle class; and the middle class in some countries has been permeated to this extent, that the less highly-trained salary-earners have mostly followed the example of doctors, lawyers, school-teachers, etc., in forming professional unions. Notably in England many federations at present maintain themselves strictly apart from those of artisans' unions. In short, salary-earners, while selling their labour just like wage-earners, yearn in their hearts to become small capitalists. They imagine that leisure is attainable only through idleness. The essentially reactionary class is not the capitalist; it is the salariat.

MONTGOMERY BELGION.

JOYS OF SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT.

To an old-fashioned fellow like myself, who grew up during the days when neighbours thought it no great harm to stop for an hour's chat by the roadside, and two days were consumed in an occasional visit to a friend's for Sunday dinner, the desperate rush of people who make a living nowadays seems simple madness, and of all modern follies, none is more characteristic of the present age than that particular folly which is euphemistically called Scientific Management.

This term, I understand, is applied to a process of creating a sort of uniformity of efficiency (I think that's how they say it—these new phrases bother me a little), and is now being tried out chiefly in factories. It means steady work and speedy work. A certain pace is set and each worker must keep up to that pace with clock-like regularity. Being regarded merely as a part of the machinery of the factory, it follows that a man who does not exactly fit in—is useless. In the ideal factory, as the experts of Scientific Management conceive it, if one should happen to stop for a moment for a sneeze or to rub a speck of dust from his eye, he may be the cause of several hundred men losing ten cents extra pay, or perhaps of the boss himself losing twenty cents.

The economists who have evolved this marvel of methodic movement, make great claims for it, and prove them too. It is found that men actually work

better, and work faster, when they know that they are likely to bring down the wrath of their fellows upon their heads. This increase of speed and dexterity, of course, means increased production, and has the additional advantage that in a short time, men working scientifically produce so much that their employers can afford to close their factories for a while in order to let consumption catch up, and during that time there is no one to pay but the watchman.

Moreover, the efficiency experts have found that men work more diligently under the spur of an incentive. With a bonus dangling before his eyes, a man will speed up to an unbelievable degree and keep at it, too, for a longer time than one would possibly imagine. We old fellows who have lived for some seventy years, and have taken time to look around us as we went along, can show you where a number of such men lie buried. The first ones I knew have moss on their tomb-stones.

It is wonderful, too, the qualities Scientific Management develops in a man. I once knew a young farmer who arose regularly every morning at four o'clock. Ploughing, or sowing, or reaping, he was first in the field, and he would change his teams at noon so as to lose no time while the horses ate. Every night at seven he was feeding his hogs; at eight he brought in the milk; he did carpentering and repair-work about the place until nine-thirty, then he would read his farm papers or sum up his accounts until ten. There was no doubt of the result. His well-kept barn-lot and white picket fence were a constant rebuke to all the young men in the neighbourhood who sometimes stopped a whole day to go to the county fair, or played horseshoe occasionally of an evening. He was a model man on a model farm scientifically managed. He made quite an impression on my early youth. Imagine then my surprise, upon returning to his neighbourhood some years ago to learn that no one could tell me what had become of him. To the members of the community he was little more than a machine. He had always been too busy to become acquainted with his less enterprising fellow-farmers. No one had ever had the courage to call on him for help. So naturally enough when the machine stopped everybody was glad to get a neighbour in its place.

For my own part, I don't believe that a pace can be set for human beings to follow invariably. If Jim Walker doesn't produce the same number of pieces the day after his wife's funeral as he did the day his eldest son required a first reader, it seems to me a bit inhuman to put a cut-wage on the record opposite the number that indicates Jim. In my younger days, his fellow-workers would have done his work for him and, perhaps, have brought him some little gift besides, just to show their friendship and sympathy. But under Scientific Management, sympathy becomes a crime against society. Its expression delays production.

It seems to me, that when men are brought together in groups, they are meant to be sociable. When I was a workman, if a fellow in the gang looked across at me with a friendly twinkle in his eye, I was pretty sure to grin back, and before noon we knew quite a good deal about each other—our families and hobbies and interests. But under Scientific Management, the workman who takes time to be friendly, is likely to cut his own efficiency and be reduced to a lower grade of work, so that, at the end of the week, he goes home to face his baby daughter with shame in his eyes and less money in his pocket.